Canada’s Debt and Deficit Analysis (1867–2025)

Federal Debt Growth Under Trudeau (2015–2025)

Canada’s federal debt increased from approximately **$612 billion in 2015** to over **$1.2 trillion by 2024** — an increase of around **$600 billion**.

This expansion was driven by consistent annual deficits and massive pandemic-related spending.

Annual Deficits Under the Liberal Government

- **2019–20:** $39 billion deficit (pre-pandemic)
- **2020–21:** $327.7 billion (COVID-19 spending peak)
- **2021–22:** $90.2 billion
- **2015–2025:** A deficit was run every single year, even during periods of economic growth

Historic Records and Fiscal Milestones

- **Most debt added by any Canadian government in history** — over $600 billion in less than 10 years
- **Longest continuous stretch of deficit spending** since WWII
- **Highest peacetime debt accumulation** ever recorded in Canada
- **Record single-year deficit:** $327.7 billion in 2020–21
- **Interest payments now exceed** federal spending on national defence and infrastructure
- **Annual debt servicing costs:** Over $46 billion

Comparative Overview: Canadian Governments Since Confederation

- **John A. Macdonald:** Focused on railway expansion, minimal federal borrowing
- **WWI & WWII Governments:** Debt increased during national emergencies
- **Pierre Trudeau:** Known for chronic deficits, but surpassed in scale by Justin Trudeau
- **Mulroney:** Inherited debt, began reducing deficits
- **Chrétien–Martin:** Balanced budgets and ran surpluses through cuts and reform
- **Harper:** Brief deficits during 2008–09 crisis, returned to balance by 2015

Conclusion

Justin Trudeau's Liberal government (2015–2025) has added more debt than all previous Canadian governments combined. With the longest streak of deficits, highest peacetime borrowing, and overwhelming debt servicing costs, it represents the most fiscally irresponsible era in Canadian history. No other Prime Minister has borrowed or spent at this rate absent a sustained national emergency.

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